

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of patterning a substrate according to a predetermined path, said method including forming a liquid film on the substrate surface and directing laser energy from a laser through the film to etch the substrate surface, the laser energy causing laser-induced sonic cavitation of the liquid film which etches the substrate and avoids formation of shoulder-like structures at a rim of irradiated portions of the substrate surface,

wherein etched material is carried away from the substrate surface via evaporation of the film during said etching.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the liquid film is formed on the substrate surface by jetting a liquid vapour onto the substrate surface.

3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 2, wherein the liquid vapour comprises at least one component selected from the group consisting of water, an alcohol, an inert liquid, and a non-reactive liquid.

4. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 2, wherein the thickness of the liquid film is in the range of several micrometers to several tens of micrometers.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 & 2, wherein the liquid vapour is jetted with a gas to carry the liquid vapour onto the substrate surface.

6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 5, wherein the gas comprises at least one component selected from the group consisting of nitrogen, compressed air, oxygen, and an inert gas.

7. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the laser directs laser energy in pulses of predetermined duration.

8. (Original) The method of claim 7, wherein the pulse duration is the range of 1 to 100ns.

9. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the laser fluence of the laser is more than the etching threshold of the substrate.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein the laser fluence is more than 150 mJ/cm².

11. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the substrate surface has an ITO film onto which the liquid film is formed.

12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the substrate has one or more layers.

13. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein at least one layer of the substrate is silicon oxide.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13, wherein the silicon oxide layer is the top layer of the substrate.

15. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the substrate is substantially composed of glass, quartz and/or silicon.

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16. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the substrate is an ITO film IC package, silicon wafer, conductor, semiconductor or insulator.